(b) whether many States have shown interest to take up coal mining as business through joint ventures with private investors;

(c) whether Government has taken away all purchasing powers that were delegated to Coal India Limited and marketing rights enjoyed by CIL for non-core sector consumers;

(d) whether as most State Governments do not have expertise or money to undertake coal mining activities, they are looking for private partners; and

(e) if so, to what extent they have been successful?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL): (a) and (b) A few State Governments have responded and requested for allocation of coal blocks. However, no request for taking up coal mining as a business in joint venture specially with private investors has been received.

(c) Barring procurement of explosives, powers have been delegated to subsidiary companies of Coal India Limited (CIL) for making their own purchases. However, development of application software coalnet in Xth Plan and activities related to R&D schemes will continue to be dealt with at CIL level. Power relating to marketing in the non-core sector have been delegated completely in case of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), Western Coalfields Limited (WCL) and South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL).

(d) and (e) Questions do not arise in view of answer given to part (b) above.

Emission of gas from coal mines

†1544. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI LAJPAT RAI:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have conducted any study in respect of human use of the gas emitting out of the coal mines;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the broad details thereof;

(c) the quantity of gas estimated to be emitted out of the coal mines of the country per annum; and

(d) in what form it can be used by transforming for human consumption?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL): (a) A demonstration project namely Coal Bed Methane Recovery and Commercial Utilisation has been taken up by Government of India in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Global Environment Facility (GEF) at Monidih and Sudamdih mines of Bharat Coking Coal Limited in Jharia Coalfields, District Dhanbad. The Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Limited (CMPDIL) is the main local implementing agency on behalf of Government of India. Bharat Coking Coal Limited is the co-implementing agency.

The project is under implementation and usage of the coalmine gas to be recovered as a consequence of this project is one of the objectives of this project.

(b) The demonstration project has been santioned by Government of India in Sept., 1999 with the total cost of Rs. 76.85 crores and the project is now under implementation. The duration of the project is of five years. The objectives of the Project are as under:

(i) To harness methane to minimise safety risks in mines, to utilise potential energy source and to mitigate damage to atmosphere as otherwise release of methane to atmosphere will be detrimental to Environment.

(ii) To bring to the country state-of-art Methodology for resource assessment and Recovery Techniques for coal bed methane with due regard to the Indian conditions.

(iii) To demonstrate utilization of the recovered coal mine gas for generation of power as well as compressed natural gas for use in coal dumpers.

(c) No such study has taken place yet.

(d) Gas emitting out of coal mines is a type of natural gas and

accordingly can be used for industrial usage depending on its composition, heat value and availability of other infrastructure for use of the gas.

Revival of Eastern Coalfields Ltd.

1545. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the present revival status of Eastern Coalfields Ltd. (ECL);

(b) whether there is any time-bound action plan to bring ECL out of BIFR; and

(c) if no, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL): (a) to (c) Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) *vide* order No. 501/2000 dated 27th February, 2001 declared the company as a Sick company under Section 3(1)(o) of the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provision) Act, (SICA), 1985 and appointed State Bank of India as Operating Agency under Section 17(3) of the SICA to formulate Rehabilitation Scheme under Section 18 of SICA. The consultant appointed by the Operating agency after holding intensive discussion at various level prepared a Rehabilitation Scheme for ECL during June, 2002.

Though the Scheme was discussed at various levels, no consensus on the Rehabilitation Scheme could be reached. However, comments were received from Government of India, Government of West Bengal and Coal India Limited on various reliefs and concessions sought from them. During the last BIFR hearing held on 7th July, 2003, BIFR directed as under:

(i) Government of India would decide on the quantum of relief and concessions and induction of funds for the revival of the Company and inform the Operating agency within a period of 90 days, but not later than 7.10.2003.

(ii) The Company would discuss with the workers' unions the issue of outsourcing and closure of the mines and submit a fully tied up rehabilitation proposal to the Operating Agency within the same 90 days. This is last chance being given to the company.